What is claimed is:

1. A method for treating a carotid artery occlusion, comprising the steps of:

inserting a distal end of a catheter into the takeoff of the left subclavian artery in the aorta, the catheter having a proximal end, the distal end of the catheter having a constricting member;

locating the constricting member in the takeoff of the left common carotid artery and the left subclavian artery from the aorta upstream the left carotid artery having an occlusion;

expanding the constricting member to constrict the inlets of the left common carotid artery and the left subclavian artery, wherein blood flow in the left carotid artery is reversed to pass over the occlusion and toward the left subclavian artery; and

advancing a therapeutic instrument into the carotid artery to reduce the occlusion.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the carotid artery having the occlusion is the internal carotid artery.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the carotid artery having the occlusion is the left common carotid artery.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the carotid artery having the occlusion is the left external carotid artery.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of locating an occluding member in the left vertebral artery to block embolization to the left vertebral artery.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the catheter is inserted into the takeoff of the subclavian artery in an antegrade direction.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the occlusion partially occludes the inlet of the left subclavian artery and the left common carotid artery.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the occlusion is a stenosis.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the occlusion is an embolus.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the occlusion is an atheroma.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the constricting member is expanded to occlude the inlet of the subclavian artery.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the constricting member is a balloon that communicates with an inflation lumen that extends to the proximal end of the catheter.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the balloon is a toroidal balloon.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutic instrument is an angioplasty catheter.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutic instrument is a stent.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutic instrument is an atherectomy catheter.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the catheter has a lumen adapted to pass the therapeutic instrument.

18. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of locating a second constricting member in the left subclavian artery downstream the takeoff of the left vertebral artery.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of expanding the second constricting member to partially occlude the subclavian artery.

20. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of infusing angiographic dye to confirm the reversal of blood flow.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the distal end of the catheter further comprises a radiopaque marker.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein a manometer is mounted distal the constricting member.

23. A method for treating a carotid artery occlusion, comprising the steps of:

inserting a distal end of a catheter into the aorta, the catheter having a proximal end, the distal end of the catheter having a constricting member;

locating the constricting member in the aortic arch downstream of the right brachiocephalic trunk and upstream of the left common carotid artery;

expanding the constricting member to constrict the aorta, wherein blood flow in a left common carotid artery is reversed to pass toward the aorta; and

advancing a therapeutic instrument into a left common carotid artery, a left internal carotid artery, or a left external carotid artery to reduce the occlusion.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of locating an occluding member in the left vertebral artery to block embolization to the left vertebral artery.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the distal end of the catheter is inserted through a subclavian artery in a retrograde direction.